

Testimony from John Souza of the Connecticut Coalition of Property Owners (CCOPO)
Before the Real Estate and Insurance Committee 2/28/2023

Good afternoon esteemed members of the Real Estate and Insurance Housing Committee. My name is John Souza and I volunteer as President of the Connecticut Coalition of Property Owners and I'm a full-time landlord. The Connecticut Coalition of Property Owners (CCOPO) is one of Connecticut's largest landlord/property owner organizations. CCOPO has affiliates in Enfield, Windham, Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, New Britain and Stamford, as well as the CT Association of Real Estate Investors (CAREI) in West Hartford. Our members own thousands of rental units throughout Connecticut, consisting of mostly small and medium sized landlords.

For over 20 years CCOPO has been a constructive voice for responsible landlords on such issues as: nuisance abatement, bedbugs, domestic violence and many others. We are here to represent the responsible small to midsize property providers, and most members are local residents of the towns they serve. These small business people often have other jobs as well as operating their property part time nights and weekends. We often know our tenants by their first names and value the relationship that benefits us both.

OPPOSE AS WRITTEN HB 6785 AN ACT CONCERNING EVICTED TENANTS' PERSONAL PROPERTY.

The tenant property removal system in CT is expensive for housing providers and the towns. Quite frankly, the tenants should be responsible for themselves. Often Landlords and towns are paying to move and store unwanted or broken furniture and belongings that the tenant doesn't want and has abandoned. Make the law that anything left behind will be considered abandoned property and the property owner can dispose of it. Or, make the moving services and storage of belongings only available by request of the tenant. This will remove a large amount of time and expense for the Property owners and the towns. As most evictions people take what they want and leave the rest.

Oppose as written

S.B. No. 1113 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING FAIR RENT COMMISSIONS

This Bill creates a new unfunded mandate and undue hardship on small towns. The legislation that went into effect last session (required of populations of 25,000 and up) hasn't been fully implemented yet by many towns and already there are problems arising. Why not wait a year or two so problems can be rooted out before making changes to the statute?

If changes are to be made to the statute now **make it fairer before it is passed by:**

- Every commission must be balanced with equal representation between landlords and tenants.
- Slow commissions: time-frames need to be much quicker from notice to decisions.
- All decisions should be retroactive to date of first filing to discourage the unnecessary burden of repeat filings to save several months of rent increase every year.
- There needs to be clear written rules for the proceedings to follow and open public deliberations required.
- Define harsh and unconscionable as: "rent above fair market value of similar units in similar condition"

Thank you for your time and consideration.

John Souza
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